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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2004

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

Open Letter to European Friends - Hurriyet
Green Light From Chirac - Hurriyet
"Yes" To Turkey - Sabah
Chirac: "Turkey Will Strengthen Europe" - Milliyet
European Parliament Rejects 'Privileged Partnership' for
Turkey - Milliyet
Le Figaro: "Erdogan A Legend in Turkey" - Star
Chirac Says 'Yes' to Turkey - Turkiye
407 Yes Votes in Every Language - Turkiye

OPINION MAKERS

Brave Support From Chirac For Turkey - Zaman
Erdogan: "If Necessary We Will Put the EU on Ice" - Zaman
European Parliament Recommends Opening of Talks - Cumhuriyet
Last Message From Ankara: "We Will Leave the Table if We
Have To" Cumhuriyet
Turkish Engineer Killed in Afghanistan, Two Drivers Killed
in Iraq - Cumhuriyet
Clear Message From Chirac - Radikal
The Longest Night in Brussels - Yeni Safak

BRIEFING

European Parliament Decision Favors Accession Talks:
Today's papers give extensive front page coverage to the
decision of the European Parliament in favor of opening
accession talks with Turkey 'without delay.' All papers
carry photos of Parliament members holding up 'yes' signs in
various languages, including some in Turkish. Opposition
"Cumhuriyet" remains skeptical about the EU decision
document, but notes that the European Parliament dismissed
the idea of a 'privileged partnership' as an alternative to
full EU membership. He paper claims, however, that the
Parliament approved a proposal urging Turkey to recognize
the Armenian genocide. In a press conference after the
vote, European Parliament Speaker Joseph Borrell said that
the Parliament was not seeking alternatives to Turkey's
accession.

Support From EU Leaders: All papers report the strong
support expressed by French President Chirac for the
beginning of EU membership talks with Turkey in a TV
interview yesterday. In the interview, Chirac said the
Turks are 'honorable people' who would never accept a
'privileged partnership.' Turkey's EU accession would be in
Europe's interest, and would make Europe stronger. "Zaman"
reports that Chirac warned that the EU would pay a high
price by rejecting Turkey. "Vatan" claims Chirac's remarks
have changed the mood in favor of Turkey. "Sabah" reports
that British Prime Minister Tony Blair called Erdogan prior
to his departure for Brussels to extend support to the
Turkish position on Cyprus. "Cumhuriyet" reports that
German FM Fischer wrote an article published in the German
daily "Bild" urging the EU to approve the opening of talks
and stressing that Turkey is a part of Europe.

Powell Calls Gul on EU Issue: "Sabah" reports that US
Secretary of State Powell called Turkish FM Gul to reiterate

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US support for Turkey's EU entry. Powell stressed that the
US is ready to extend all necessary support to Turkey.
"Radikal" notes that the US is closely following
developments at the EU summit.
Turkish Leaders' Comments: "Hurriyet" reports that PM
Erdogan sent a letter to EU leaders on the eve of the
summit. The letter was published in today's edition of the
German newspaper "Bild". In his letter, Erdogan reminds the

EU that in NATO, Turkish and European soldiers fought shoulder to shoulder for freedom and democracy. He added that now Turkey wants to share the same values of freedom and democracy with Europe under one roof. Erdogan expresses confidence in the potential of Turkish people for change and development, and adds that Turkey would offer advantages to the EU economy with its young population and economic dynamism. "Hurriyet" also highlights Erdogan's remarks that 'if the EU tries to impose unacceptable conditions, we will definitely put the matter on ice and continue on our way.' In a press conference at the airport on his way to Brussels, Foreign Minister Gul said that Turkey is looking forward to a clear statement for accession talks to begin. Gul implied, however, that Turkey could leave the negotiations if 'forced' to do so by the EU.

Turks Killed in Afghanistan, Iraq: All papers report that a Turkish engineer working on a highway project in Afghanistan was killed by his captors after being abducted on Tuesday. Meanwhile, two more Turkish truck drivers were reportedly killed on the road north of Baghdad.

Interview With Treasury DAS Loevinger: The economic daily "Referans" carries a front-page interview with Treasury DAS David Loevinger focusing on the positive aspects of Turkey's EU accession and a number of US-Turkish bilateral economic issues. Loevinger had come to Ankara for contacts with economic officials following the first meeting of the Forum for the Future in Rabat, Morocco. He stressed that Turkey could bring needed economic dynamism to the EU, and noted that EU accession would be good for the Turkish economy. Loevinger added that US Treasury officials were providing assistance to Turkey on tax and tax collection issues. Asked about the 8.5 billion USD loan package approved by Congress for Turkey in 2003, Loevinger noted that the package had served as a stabilizing influence in Turkish markets. He stressed that Turkish officials are aware that the loans are still available should they choose to accept them. Loevinger said there is no specific deadline for a Turkish decision on the loans. The DAS praised Turkey's successful implementation of its IMF program, but noted that persistent obstacles in the Turkish bureaucracy and judiciary had served to limit foreign direct investment in Turkey.

EDITORIAL OPINION: EU-Turkey

"Time for Turkey and the EU to Act Responsibly"
Mehmet Barlas commented in the mass appeal "Sabah" (12/16): "Turkey placed itself as an active part of the Western world during the cold war. Today the world is going through an intercultural cold war, and through its western and Muslim identity, Turkey has a chance to prove that this war is not rational. Turkey has a role to play in bringing this atmosphere of confrontation to an end. If the leaders of the EU pave the way for Turkey's membership, the challenges we have seen in the first four years of the 21st century can be overcome. An EU-Turkey cohabitation will bring some difficulties, but countless benefits as well."

"Good News"
Gungor Mengi wrote in the mass appeal "Vatan" (12/16): "Turkey sees its future in Europe, and wants to be a part of European Union. This certainly will mean a heavy price to pay, both economically and socially, for the EU. However, the pay-off for the EU is the fact that by letting Turkey in, there will be message given to the Islamic world that highlights the EU as a global power. Tomorrow is a critical day. We hope nad believe there will be a decision to celebrate."

"Hope for the Best"
Idris Akyuz wrote in the mass appeal-sensational "Posta" (12/16): "It seems that the Turkish Prime Minister has demonstrated the leadership necessary to convince European leaders regarding Ankara's expectations from the December 17 summit. The summit should provide a date for the start of negotiations on the way to full EU accession. It should be clear, and there should be no strings attached. The PM was convincing enough to show that Turkey will not accept certain conditions. Enough things are going in the right direction to give ample reason for optimism. The European Parliament's approval of the positive report on Turkey and its rejection of a 'privileged membership' status bodes well for tomorrow's meeting of EU leaders."

EDELMAN